

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

At the age of thirty-six (in the mid 1980's) I went to work for a large tool manufacturer. My supervisor was



Chuck Warren (not his real name), a devoted Born Again Christian. Chuck was about five years older than me, intelligent and a good family man. We soon began having philosophical discussions on management and family life. Our discussions then turned toward religion and faith. Knowing that I was a Jew, Chuck both challenged and urged me to accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. I replied that I was not looking to change to another religion. I had little more than a basic knowledge of my own religion. I shared with him that I had never read the Bible, so I could not make a choice between my faith and Christianity without having a good knowledge of my religion. We then agreed to study the Bible together a few times a week in his office at lunch, and critically discuss what the Bible was saying to us.

FAST FORWARD TO NOVEMBER , 2017. It has been about thirty-three years since I have seen Chuck. He now is retired and lives in North Carolina, and I still live in Ohio. Over the years we have had telephone conversations on various subjects ranging from the death of close friends, co-workers and politics. The conversations nearly always ended with

Chuck urging me to bring Christ into my life and accept Christianity. In early November, 2017, Chuck shared with me that he and his wife would be visiting members of her family in Columbus, Ohio later in the month. We arranged to meet at an Amish restaurant midway between Cleveland and Columbus.

I arrived at the restaurant about fifteen minutes before Chuck. I had a seat in the crowded lobby, and do not mind sharing with you that I was a bit nervous. Since we were both dealing with health issues, I felt, and I believed that Chuck also felt that there was a good chance that this might be the last time we saw one another face-to-face during our lifetime. I spent my time reading a book while waiting for Chuck. In a few minutes, I felt the Chuck's presence in the lobby and at the same time we immediately recognized one another! Time had put on and then taken away some gray hair off both of our heads, our bellies had grown a bit, but we both looked the same!

After the hostess seated us, we engaged in some small talk about our families and friends. We placed our lunch order and resumed our conversation. As was customary, when our food arrived, Chuck said grace over our meal and thanked God for allowing us to get together. For the first time since I had known Chuck, I asked him if he would mind if I also said a prayer. I chose the Jewish prayer called the Shehecheyanu which, when translated from Hebrew reads, "Blessed are you Lord our God King of the Universe who has given us life, sustained us and allowed us to reach this day." This blessing is said when something is done for the first time that year, such as ushering in a Jewish Holiday, eating newly harvested produce and when meeting old friends.

During our lunch Chuck asked me again to consider accepting Jesus into my life. He told me that he knew I was a good person, and that he often has prayed for me, but the only way I could have an afterlife in heaven

was to accept Jesus into my life. I shared with him that I did not believe that this was true, and that good people regardless of their faith or lack thereof are not condemned to an eternity in hell. He then challenged me to share with him my concept of God and why I should not commit to Jesus and receive an eternal blessing from God. The book, *The Challenge*, is my answer!

THE AUTHOR

Perhaps the most complex person you will ever meet is Ken Cooper. A gifted speaker and talented writer, Ken is a true “child of the 60’s and has a reputation of fighting for the underdog. He has spoken as a consumer advocate to groups of as large as 500 people on such topics as How not to get ripped off by a funeral home, and how not to get taken by an insurance agent or insurance company. He is a renaissance man, having



written books on politics, *Citizen Ken Asks, is Anyone Paying Attention*, and has co-authored a book on management, *No Will to Manage*. His latest book *The Challenge* is a straight forward hard-hitting book, that tells both Christians and Jews why it is so hard for a missionary or a friend to convert a Jew to Christianity. It is surprising in its revelations that Jesus is not the only problem separating Jews and Christians. In addition to the “Jesus problem”, Jews and Christians differ in how they view heaven and hell, the Messiah, Satan/the devil, Original Sin, Salvation, The Laws and Prayer (just to name a few of the many differences highlighted in *The Challenge*). When a Christian tries to convert a Jew, he is trying to undo nearly 3,500 years of culture, religion and a national identity. He tells both the Christian and the Jew what the Jew is consciously or unconsciously thinking when he is being proselytized.

Ken has been a synagogue Youth Group Leader, Religious School Teacher, and has served on the Board of his synagogue. He was raised in two suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio, one a suburb where he was one of less than a dozen Jewish students in his high school and

another suburb where Jews were over 90% of the student population. He felt uncomfortable in both environments. Ken has earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication from Cleveland State University and a Master’s Degree in Business Administration from Baldwin Wallace College. Ken is married to Amy Cooper and is the father of three adult children and five grandchildren